

What about the ‘GDP Gorillas’?

Focusing on economic growth, measured by GDP, as the key indicator of a healthy economy can distract us from some really big issues - a bit like [the gorilla](#) in the experiment about attention!

When we think about measures of the economy overall, we also have to consider what important ‘GDP Gorillas’ we are paying less attention to and that we might miss...

GDP Gorilla: Inequality



An economy might be growing but that doesn’t mean everyone gets to share the extra wealth equally... GDP measures the total amount of money used in the economy. It doesn’t measure how this money is **shared**.

Even if our economy is bigger, it can still be very unequal. In fact, in our economy, most of the wealth is concentrated on a very small number of people. This is called **inequality**.

GDP does not tell us anything about how well individual people live and how much they have. Do you think inequality matters?

Example opinion: “[Inequality is] the defining challenge of our times”. Barack Obama, US president, speech, December 2013

GDP Gorilla: The environment



GDP does not measure impact on the environment. We need the environment’s free services like clean water and fresh air, and for the climate to be stable to grow food.

If we keep producing more and more goods and services without making them more **sustainable**, we’re also running the risk of damaging a planet with limited resources.

Example opinion: ‘Humanity’s 21st century challenge is to meet the needs of all within the means of the planet. In other words, to ensure that no one falls short on life’s essentials... while ensuring that collectively we do not overshoot our pressure on Earth’s life-supporting systems, on which we fundamentally depend – such as a stable climate, fertile soils, and a protective ozone layer.’

Kate Raworth, ecological economist